“…which is about the organizing powers of journals, editors, and learned societies, and their abilities to build communities of discourse around scientific findings.”

Phil Davis, blog post, The Scholarly Kitchen

Church and State: Navigating the Journal-Society Relationship

Alison Denby, Editorial Director

Oxford University Press and Society Publishing

• Not-for-profit publisher with mission to promote research and education
• Over 300 journals and 6,000 books a year from humanities to life sciences and medicine
• Around 2/3rds are owned and published for societies
• Surplus
  – to societies
  – reinvested in business
  – supports research through Oxford University
Conflict of Interest?

Potential Conflicts

- Diverse membership base
- Goals for journal
- Changes in leadership within society
- Financial drivers
- Operational focus

Or, Source of Strength?
Strengths

- Mission
- Member community
- Structure
- Financial security/support
- Separation of business from content
- Infrastructure
- Staff
- Reputation

Ingredients to Manage Conflicts and Exploit Strengths

- Agreed strategy
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Clear objectives for society, editorial team, partners
- Overlapping terms for key roles
  - Editor
  - Publications Chair
  - Board members

CHURCH AND STATE: NAVIGATING THE JOURNAL-SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP
**EDITORIAL OFFICE – SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP**

- Society
- Journal
- Member benefit
- Official publication
- Forum to enhance knowledge & understanding
- Revenue generator

**TYPES OF JOURNAL/SOCIETY RELATIONSHIPS**

- Society
- Journal
- Society
- Journal
- Publisher

**WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “JOURNAL”**

- Editor/Editorial Office synonymous with the journal brand or reputation
  - More than just content gatekeeper
  - Involved in publishing decisions (sales, marketing, content functionality)
  - Powerful voice within a society
  - Independent

- Editor/Editorial Office anonymous
  - Editor is not engaged/prominent within the field
  - Editorial office staff not primarily focused on journal
  - Little interaction in publishing decisions
DEFINING THE ROLES OF THE OWNER/SOCIETY AND THE EDITOR

“Owners and editors of medical journals have a common endeavor—publication of a reliable, readable journal produced with due respect for the stated aims of the journal and for costs. Owners and editors, however, have different functions. Owners have the right to appoint and dismiss editors and to make important business decisions in which editors should be involved to the fullest extent possible. Editors must have full authority for determining the editorial content of the journal.”

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research.

AREAS OF TENSION

- Is a journal an independent voice?
- Is it the mouthpiece of a society?
  - Should it reflect the opinions of the organization that owns the publication?
  - Who controls the society message?
- Can it be both?
- Can it be both by successfully mediating tensions between differing editorial and society visions?

AREAS OF TENSION: EDITORIAL FREEDOM

In medical journal publishing, ICMJE and WAME have both clearly stipulated what editorial freedom means:

“...editorial freedom, or independence, is the concept that editors-in-chief have full authority over the editorial content of their journal and the timing of publication of that content. Journal owners should not interfere in the evaluation, selection, or editing of individual articles either directly or by creating an environment that strongly influences decisions.”

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors. Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals: Ethical Considerations in the Conduct and Reporting of Research.
**AREAS OF TENSION: EDITORIAL FREEDOM**

- Publication of guidelines
  - Approved guidelines published without review; society dictates publication schedule
  - Editors, alternatively, may demand peer review
  - How disputes can be averted:
    - Include EiC and editorial team in guideline planning
    - All parties kept informed of intentions, progress, deadlines, and formats
    - Delineate the benefits of working together
    - Write up guideline publication policy

**AREAS OF TENSION: COMMERCIAL CONTENT**

- Editor may feel compelled to publish supplements to generate revenue for the society-owner
- Society may insist on publishing supplements
  - Revenue-based motivations
  - Political decision
- Society may arrange meeting satellite symposia proceedings
- Editor may be keen to publish a supplement but the society has negative opinions/formal policies regarding commercial publications

**AREAS OF TENSION: PROVIDING CONTENT FOR THE MEMBERSHIP**

- Balance between highly-cited and widely-read content
  - Problem becomes acute if the membership is predominantly non-academic
    - Journal may not appeal to rank and file members
    - Journals under pressure to enhance citation ranking
    - If a second, non-academic, publication exists, this may relieve pressure on the journal to balance content
TENSIONS BASED ON EDITORIAL OFFICE SET-UP

- **EO run by editor’s staff**
  - Staff loyalty to editor
  - Harder to enforce standards & training if not employees
  - Editor could build powerbase
  - Lack of continuity

- **EO run by society staff**
  - Professional editorial staff/society professionals, not just editorial-focused
  - Society staff can bring stability
  - Split loyalties

- **EO run by contractors**
  - Staff may need to mediate conflicts
  - Loyalties may be split

OTHER AREAS OF TENSION

- **Disengaged society**
  - Journal may drift both editorially and with business planning with no society checks & balances or leadership and unskilled/weak editor

- **Overbearing society**
  - Over-involved society leaders or executive director

- **Red Tape**
  - Small, pro-active, editorial office may be more nimble than a committee-heavy society
  - Problematic if journal wants to embrace industry-leading ideas (e.g. online functionality) and society is not ready

METHODS TO RESOLVE TENSION

- **Publication Committee approach:**
  - Engaged, often experienced, society members/leaders
  - Can provide decision-making support for the editor
  - The editor is often a member of the committee
  - Committee can vet editorial requests before referring them to the board of directors
  - Committee can appraise the editor/editorial staff
  - Committee could review budgets and shield editor from financial matters
  - Lead new editor selection process
  - Committee can help handle contract issues
I added a quick note below -- "Other" as in combinations of these models

Mary Billingsley, 4/5/2013
Journals are normally the #1 or #2 most valued member benefit

Consistently high quality content in a journal may help sustain or even increase membership

Mutually beneficial relationship to advance the educational aims of the society

Journal can be a supportive forum for members to publish research

AREAS OF SUPPORT

Societies can mobilize members to support journal content recruitment and promotion initiatives:
- Contribute papers
- Highlight content to boost readership
- Adapt content for other uses
  * e.g. Patient education pages
- Provide digests or undertake social media activities to reach “rank and file” members

Societies could fund:
- Awards with proviso that award-winning research is then published in the journal
- Content quality services e.g. statistician, illustrator

Society could provide opportunities/resources to support authors and reviewers:
- Author training courses at conferences
- Virtual journal club opportunities – learn to construct and deconstruct papers
- Such programs help to build sense of loyalty and inclusiveness towards both society and journal
Where Do Learners Fall Along the Society & Journal Continuum?

Pamela Liao (nee Verma)
University of Toronto – Obstetrics & Gynaecology
Founder, Former Editor in Chief – University of British Columbia Medical Student Journal

Models

Journal

University

Society

How Did You Become an Editor?

“I was practicing General Medicine and kind of went into editing by mistake”
~ Fiona Godlee, BMJ

“I’ve basically become the Editor of CMAJ by default”
~ Paul Hebert, Former Editor CMAJ
How Did You Become an Editor?

“By complete accident. I was sitting in a bar in England when I saw an advert...they asked me to come for an interview and changed my life evermore”

~ Richard Horton, Lancet

Journal

- Student Editions
  - Student BMJ, Student Lancet
  - Student JAMA (out of print)

- Learner Specific Submission Category

- Editorial – Learner Positions

THE LANCET Student

Example: CMAJ Editorial Fellowship

CMAJ's Editorial Fellowship

The CMAJ editorial fellowship provides an exciting opportunity to work at the Canadian Medical Association Journal, Canada's leading general medical journal. Applications are invited from people who have completed medical training and at least one year's residency.

The fellow will gain experience across a wide range of activities including peer review and selection of manuscripts, commissioning, editorial writing, communications and office procedures.

The position is full-time for one year. Starting in 2013 and is located at CMAJ offices in Ottawa. The salary is based on the equivalent residency or fellowship remunerations in Canada.

Please apply by submitting a CV and cover letter before Apr. 8, 2013.

For more information, please contact Dr. John Felsher, CMAJ Editor-in-Chief, at john.felsher@cmaj.ca, call 613-951-7516, ext. 3396.
Society
- Junior Members
  - Committees
- Discounted Subscriptions
  - $459 USD
  - $120 USD Membership

Social Media

University
- Journal Club
- Critical Appraisal Activities
- Host/support student journals
- The second church?
Case 3: UBC Medical Journal

Student Run Journals

- Greater interest
- Better trained and experienced graduates
- More engaged/active members of societies
- Better *future* submissions


Writer’s / Peer Reviewer’s Workshop

- Introduction to CONSORT Guidelines
- Review two articles
- Questions/answers of editorial staff
# Medical Student-Run Journals

**Canada**
- University of British Columbia Medical Journal
- University of Alberta Health Sciences Journal
- Queens Health Sciences Journal
- University of Toronto Medical Journal
- McMaster University Medical Journal
- University of Victoria Journal of Medicine
- St. Michael's Journal of Medicine

**United States**
- Student JAMA (out of publication now)
- Michigan Medical Journal (MMJ)
- Journal of Minority Medical Students
- ESMR Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences (EMJ)
- Medical Student Research Journal (MSRJ)
- Library Scientist Journal
- Student Anesthesia Journal
- JPM Student Urban Journal (JPMUJ)
- University of North Carolina Medical Student Research Journal
- Berkeley Medical Journal
- Post-Graduate Medical Journal

**United Kingdom**
- The Lancet Student
- Student British Medical Journal (SBMJ)
- London Student Journal of Medicine
- Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RSCI), Student Medical Journal
- Trinity Student Medical Journal

**Europe**
- Student Research Journal (Michigan)
- Library Journal
- Student Anesthesia Journal
- JPM Medical Student (JPMJ)
- University of North Carolina Medical Student Research Journal
- Berkeley Medical Journal
- Post-Graduate Medical Journal

**Australia**
- Australian Medical Student Journal: New Zealand Medical Student Journal
- International Journal of Student Research

Models

- Journal
  - authors
  - editors
  - journal clubs
  - student publications

- University
  - training
  - student publications
  - opportunities

- Society
  - members
  - subscriptions
  - meetings

The Dream

Student Editorial Society
References/Reading List


Policy Statement:
- The Relationship Between Journal Editors-in-Chief and Owners, WAME (2009)
  http://www.wame.org/resources/policies#independence

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